

John – An In-Depth Study

[Part 2]

John 1:1-2 [NIV] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”*

John starts his gospel at the real beginning, and this is where every study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, should begin.

Mark starts his gospel with Jesus being baptised by John the Baptist.

Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Luke takes us back to the birth of John the Baptist as the one who prepared the way for Jesus Christ’s ministry.

John introduces us to Jesus Christ in the only way that the Son of God can be.

Outside of time, place or human ancestry. Jesus existed *“in the beginning.”*

This phrase should remind his readers of **Genesis 1:1**.

Indeed John goes back even further before there existed a physical universe, when only God existed.

For very good technical reasons, John does **not** mention Jesus until after this prologue, so as to first capture the attention of both Jews and Gentiles.

The Jews thought that God’s Word was alive and active, [**Isaiah 55:11**] as illustrated in the creation account [**Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, etc.**] *“let there be...”* the spoken word was all that was needed for order to come out of chaos.

Greek philosophy used the word *“logos”* for the logical philosophy behind the universe.

John brings these thoughts together with the amazing idea that would be acceptable to both Jews and Gentiles that the Word was not only pre-existent with God but also personal. The Word was God, not some sort of lesser divinity.

The Word was God, divine, personal, existing in the unity of the godhead and yet somehow distinct.

We must always remember that when we are studying the nature of God that we are moving into the spirit realm where the rules that govern the physical world do **not** apply.

What we are studying in these first verses of John’s gospel is the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

In many ways this is difficult for finite human minds to fully understand.

There is one simple but important fact that because the Word was part of the eternal scheme of things, it means that God was always like the Word, soon by John to be revealed as Jesus Christ.

Some when reading the Old Testament think of God the Father being just, holy, stern and avenging, and that something that Jesus did changed God’s anger into love, and altered God’s attitude towards human beings.

This is a false conception.

John 1:17-18 [NIV] *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”*

Law and grace are both aspects of God’s nature that He uses in dealing with human beings. [Also read **1 Corinthians 10:4; Exodus 17:6; Deuteronomy 32:3-4**]

God has always been like Jesus Christ [a Christian] but humans did **not** realise this until the coming of Jesus Christ in human form.

There has always been this intimate connection between the Word and God the Father.

“The Word was God,” when Greek uses a noun it almost always uses a definite article with it.

When Greek speaks about God *“theos”* the definite article with it is *“ho.”*

When the Greek does **not** use the definite article, the noun becomes much more like an adjective, it describes the character and quality of the object or person.

John does **not** use the definite article, so the Word is indicated as being the same character, quality and essence as God the Father. [**John 14:8-9**]

John 1:3 [NIV] *“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”*

Christianity has always believed that all physical and spiritual creation came out of nothing.

John is making this statement to counter the heresy of Gnosticism, which denies the creation of matter by God, for God being Holy could never touch matter that is evil.

Evolution is a modern form of Gnosticism.

Christianity has always believed that the universe is God’s personal property [**Haggai 2:8; Deuteronomy 10:14**] and He is intimately involved in the world.

The Gnostics tried to put blame for evil in the world on God, because being Holy could have nothing to do with what goes on this world. Such a thought is inspired by Satan who is the source of all evil.

Christianity believes that all that is wrong in the world is result of human sin, prompted by Satan. [**Revelation 12:9; 1 John 5:19**]

Genesis 1:2-23 is the story of the recreation of the surface of this world after it was made formless and empty [or in chaos] as a result of Satan’s rebellion against the Creator God [**Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Psalms 104:30**].

After God finished His physical recreation [**Psalms 104:30**] He called it very good [**Genesis 1:31**] not evil.

John 1:4 [NIV] *“In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”*

Two wonderful and very important themes are mentioned in this short verse, life and light.

Life, Greek word *“zōē”* meaning life as a principle, life in the absolute sense as God has it.

Life which the Father gave to the Son, Jesus Christ, to have in Himself. [**John 5:26**]

John begins this letter with *“life”* and concludes with the same theme. [**John 20:31**]

Throughout John's gospel is recorded the many times that this word was spoken by our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It was a painful experience for Jesus that people would **not** come to Him to be given real life, now and on into eternity. [**John 5:39-40**]

Instead of going to Jesus, the pride instilled in humans by Satan, causes them to seek life by their own actions and lifestyle.

The theme of life is mentioned often in John's gospel and as we come to it in our study we will expand on its meaning and how we receive it from God.

Light – the presence of Jesus Christ in the world was the coming of light into a darkened world.

Light is the very opposite to darkness, which depicts the blindness and evil which is in this world as a result of human sin and the influence of Satan and his demons, who live in darkness.

For expansion on this theme of light and darkness please download and study the article '*Let There Be Light*' found under the main heading '*Bible Study*.'

John 1:5 [R.S.V.] "*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*"

To John there was a darkness in the world that was as real as the light.

The Greek word translated darkness is "*skōtia*" and in this scripture is referring to spiritual or moral darkness.

What is wonderful about this verse is that as we know by physical example, that once a light is brought into a room the darkness cannot put it out but has to yield to the light.

Darkness also stands for ignorance. [**John 8:12; John 12:35**]

John also uses darkness symbolically. [**John 6:17; John 20:1; John 13:30**]

The word translated "*overcome*" is "*katalambanō*" meaning to lay hold of so as to possess as one's own, apprehend. To pursue until we overtake, lay hold on and overcome.

It could mean that evil in the world has done all it can to eliminate Jesus Christ, even to crucify Him, but it could never destroy Him and His work of salvation.

John 1:6-8 [NIV] "*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*"

John the Baptist was a prophetic voice, for some 400 years the voice of prophecy had been silent.

The apostle John does not want in his gospel to criticise John the Baptist, or underrate his importance.

It is simply that there were certain people who gave John the Baptist a place that encroached upon the place of Jesus Christ Himself.

John the Baptist recognised the possible problem himself.

[**John 1:20; John 3:25-30; John 4:1; John 10:40-41**]

We have in these verses one of the key words in John's gospel, the word "*witness*" Greek word "*marturia*" meaning evidence given, report, testimony.

The origin of the English word martyr, as a person who is willing to die in order to witness to their beliefs.

This is what happened to John the Baptist. [**Matthew 14:3-12**]

In John's gospel there are eight witnesses to the unique position of Jesus Christ.

- 1) Witness of God the Father – **John 5:37; John 8:18.**
- 2) Witness of Jesus Himself – **John 8:14**, meaning what Jesus Christ was and what He claimed to be.
- 3) Witness of His works – **John 5:36; John 10:25; John 14:11; John 15:24.**
- 4) Witness of the scriptures – **John 5:39; John 5:46; John 1:45.**
- 5) Witness of John the Baptist – **John 1:7-8.**
- 6) Witness of all who came in contact with Jesus – **John 4:39; John 9:25, 38; John 12:17.**
- 7) Witness of disciples, especially John – **John 15:27; John 19:35; John 21:24.**
- 8) Witness of the Holy Spirit – **John 15:26.**

John also wrote of the witness of the Holy Spirit in his first letter. [**1 John 5:6**]

In Jewish thought the Holy Spirit had two functions.

The Holy Spirit enabled people to **recognise** the truth that He had **inspired** to be written by the prophets.

So the Holy Spirit that enabled people to recognise Jesus Christ, the truth, [**John 14:6**] and then to trust in Him to do what He has promised.

John 1:9 [NIV] *“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”*

John uses a very important word to describe Jesus in this verse.

John says that Jesus was the true or real light.

The Greek word translated “*true*” is “*alēthinōs*” meaning genuine as opposed to unreal or false.

Before Jesus there were other “*lights*” which humans followed. Some were faint glimpses of real truth, some only led people into darkness.

There are still partial or false lights that human beings follow today. [**2 Corinthians 11:10-15**]

When Jesus Christ came into the world as the light of the world He eradicated many shadows.

The shadow of doubt – until Jesus appeared humans could only guess about God.

To Pagans, God was either in the shadows that no-one could penetrate or in the light that no-one could approach.

The shadow of despair – people may have hated their sins but could **not** leave them. People despaired of ever making themselves or this society what they knew it should be.

But with the coming of Jesus Christ, a new power, a new dynamic way of life came to all humans. Jesus came not only with knowledge, but with power. A presence in which all the seemingly impossible things became possible.

The shadow of death – the ancient world feared death and were in the bondage of death because of this fear.

Jesus by His human birth, life, death and resurrection showed humanity that death was only a doorway to a better eternal life.

John 1:10-11 [NIV] *“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”*

The Greek word translated “world” is “*kōsmōs*” meaning orderly arrangement, and adornment.

When John wrote this passage he had two thoughts in his mind.

The time before Jesus Christ came into the world as a human being – from the beginning of time God’s Logos [Word] had been active in the world.

In the physical beginning of the universe the Triune God put into motion the desired purpose of God the Father [**Genesis 1:26-27**], then the Word of God and the Holy Spirit brought the universe into being [**Genesis 1:1**].

Romans 1:18-20 [NIV] *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

If humans had only had the sense to see Him, the Logos, the Word. He was always visible and recognisable in what had been created.

All the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator God that is seen in the physical creation of the universe should lead all humanity to Jesus Christ their Saviour and the One who will reconcile them to God the Father.

Satan in his hatred for all human beings has blinded the vast majority to the revelation of their Saviour by implanting in their minds the delusion of evolution, that seeks to do away with a Creator God, the Word, Jesus Christ.

To open your eyes to this lie please download and study our articles listed under ‘*The Delusion Of Evolution.*’

We need also to look at God’s creation within us –

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.”*

Every human being has within them the power to think, to reason and to know.

Literally this is a reflection of God’s creative power within each of us.

None of us can explain who we are apart from this creative power of God within us.

We did **not** give ourselves life, nor did we give ourselves the thought patterns which guide and direct our lives.

It must have come from a creative power that is outside of ourselves.

1 Corinthians 2:7-16 [NIV] *“No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’, but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment: ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”*

It is the interaction of the Holy Spirit and this human spirit that allows a human being to know our Creator God.

As yet the Holy Spirit has **not** been made available to all human beings [**John 6:44**], hence the vast majority of humans are blinded to the saving power of the gospel message. [**2 Corinthians 4:4**]

The Creator God has allowed this to happen for a very loving reason. God desires to use human beings to be vehicles in His hands to bring the message of salvation to other human beings. [**Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:10**]

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”*

This is a time, after the return of Jesus Christ, when all who have been called by God the Father in each generation will be priests/teachers of all who have never known their Creator, Saviour and High Priest, Jesus Christ.

This is when all who have **not** known of or recognised Jesus Christ, Jew and Gentile, will have their eyes open to Him as their Lord and Saviour.

John 1:12-13 [NIV] *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

There is a sense in which humans are **not** naturally children of God.

There is a sense in which humans have to **become** children of God.

God will never force any human being to do anything.

God has given us all a human spirit that allows us to make choices.

God will show to us very clearly the outcome of the choice we make, but will **not** decide our choice for us.

The choice to become a child of God will involve a re-birth.

This will be studied when we come to chapter three of this gospel of John.

This subject is covered on our website under the main heading '*Born Again*' if you wish to download and study the four articles on this subject.